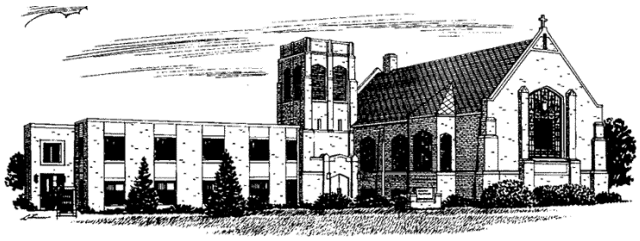


The Rev. Joan Oleson, Pastor
Home: 269-983-2475
Email: *oleson@saronlutheran.org*

Marcus Roll, Senior Choir Director,
Bell Choir Director
Email: roll1mc@gmail.com
Irma Gorman, Organist
Margaret Froehlich, Administrative Assistant
Megan Savage Financial Secretary
Email: financial@saronlutheran.org
Emily Gaul, Child Care

Typical Sunday Schedule at Saron:
During the School Year:
8:30 & 11:00 A.M. Worship
Childcare provided
9:40 Learning for Ages 2 – Adult

Summers (thru Labor Day weekend):
9:30 Holy Communion
Childcare provided
No Learning Hour

During the present Pandemic:
11:00 a.m. via Zoom

All are welcome!

We hold in prayer:
The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton,
Presiding Bishop, ELCA
The Rev. Dr. Craig Satterlee, Bishop of the
North/West Lower Michigan Synod, ELCA
The Episcopal Diocese of Western MI

Our Companion Synods:

Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras
Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea
Lutheran Church of Latvia

Saron's Mission:
Joyfully sharing God's love for all!!

SARON NEWSLETTER

Saron Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA)
510 Main Street
St. Joseph, Michigan 49085

Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email: info@saronlutheran.org
Phone: 269-983-1273
Facebook:
www.facebook.com/saronlutheranchurchst.joseph

October 2020

I am grateful for the support and understanding so many have shown for Saron leadership's decision to hold off on in-the-building worship at least until November 1. We will review this decision at our council meeting on October 19. If you have not yet seen the letter regarding that decision, check out Saron's website at www.saronlutheran.org.

In the meantime, there is a LOT of ministry happening – Sunday morning worship via Zoom, mid-week outdoor Eucharist services, learning opportunities for a variety of ages, delivery of Bibles and Sunday School lessons to our young people, care calls made, care cards sent, meals prepared for the Soup Kitchen, book group, building repairs and planning, progress on the lounge project, as well as opportunities with community groups and ministries. And, more things are still taking shape. I pray that you will link in, whenever and wherever possible. Because things are continually changing, watch for mid-week communications from Saron that will keep you informed.

A note from Don Hafer-
In October we will begin our Stewardship Emphasis. Mission moments will be offered October 11, 18, and 25 during our Zoom worship. A virtual Prayer Vigil will be held on Friday, October 16, beginning at 4 PM. The weeks of October 18 and 25 will offer Bible studies during the week, culminating in Commitment Sunday on November 1. All of this as we extend our commitments through our annual giving and Project Fortify and Fly, as we respond to God's goodness to/for God's people. Watch for more details!

As we plan, thank you for your patience. Be safe and healthy! *Pastor Joan*

Caring and Sharing

In Our Prayers –

Arla Huelsberg and Richard Schalon are at the Whitcomb Tower Retirement Center, St. Joseph; **Bernice Koski** is at Woodland Terrace.

Office Hours at Saron (these hours will vary during Covid-19)
Margaret (secretary): Mon-Tues, 9 AM - 1 PM
Weds of Newsletter Week, 9 AM - 1 PM
Volunteers: Weds, 9:15 AM - 11 AM (approximately)
Financial Secretary: Megan Savage; Tues & Thurs 5:30 PM
financial@saronlutheran.org
Call the office for more information.
When Pastor is out of town, emergency pastoral care information can be obtained by calling the church office (983.1273) or contacting the president of the congregation.
Note: E-mails meant for Pastor should be addressed to oleson@saronlutheran.org. E-mails to Margaret and the church office should be addressed to info@saronlutheran.org.

Happy Birthday Wishes to Saron's Members in October 2020

Oct. 2 – Steve Cook
Judith Wedde
4 – Jim Oleson
Mary Kynast
8 - Jonathon Peterson
10 - Hannah Breyen
12 – Andrew Olson
13 – Kerri Hoodlebrink
14 - Pauline Ngonyani
15 – Elias Coar
16 – Kristine Weber
17 – Savannah Talbert
18 – Katherine Ulrey
19 - Robert Baumgartner
20 – Keith Stevens
24 – Matthew Baumgartner
26 – Gary Cowall
Amanda Bradley
29 - Donald Moely
31 - Ivan Kiessel

Happy Anniversary Wishes to Saron's Members in October 2020

Oct. 2 - Steve and Cynthia Schmidt
6 –Robert and Charlene Baumgartner
13 –David and Susan Bailey

"God's Blessings for a very happy day and year round"

PRAYER GROUP

Join us on Mondays at 11:00 a.m. for a time of quiet reflection and prayer. Presently, this happens individually in homes; please email any requests to oleson@saronlutheran.org. Thank you.

With Sympathy

We offer our prayers and sympathy to Steve and Denise Cook and family upon the death of Steve's mother, Rosalie Malott, on September 7. Rosalie's funeral was held on September 11.

God is our refuge and strength. Psalm 46:1a

CONGRATULATIONS TO TYLER COOK

Congratulations to Tyler Cook who recently graduated from Worsham College of Mortuary Science. Tyler was chosen by his classmates to receive the "Outstanding Professionalism" award. Outstanding job, Tyler

CROP WALK

CONGRATULATIONS! With your help, we have been successful in raising over $19, 487 to help supply food to millions of God's children in the Blossomland area and around the world. ***THANK YOU FOR A JOB WELL DONE!***

As summer transitions into fall, the days get shorter and the nights get colder. For some, life may get busier with school and sports. Others may start to plan for winter travels. This year, we don't know what fall or winter will bring and that's okay. We can still focus on what's in our realm of influence. We know for the time being, we will continue using Zoom to worship together. We know eventually we will gather again inside the church. We know that when the building does re-open, not everyone will be ready to return at the same time. To address all of those needs, the Technology Committee and Marcus are working on updates that will enhance the Zoom worship experience and prepare for when Zoom will be used simultaneously with in-person worship. As strange as it may sound, we're also waiting for a nice heavy downpour to verify all leaks are fixed so we can move on to patching and painting the damaged area in the sanctuary. That only tends to occur when it's inconvenient so maybe if we all plan picnics, we can help make that happen!

As of the end of August 2020, we had collected $268,361 towards our 3 year pledge total of $371,165. That's almost 75% of our goal! We continue to be amazed by our faithful and generous congregation. Thank you and happy fall!

As Saron took on their Fortify and Fly Capital Appeal, the congregation voted to send a tithe of our appeal receipts to ministries outside the Saron building. Here are the thank yous from our recently sent gifts.

THANK YOU NOTE FROM LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE

Dear People of Saron Lutheran Church,
Thank you for your ongoing partnership with Lutheran Disaster Response, and for your recent $2,500 gift! Thank you especially for your support when so many neighbors are in need, when so many neighbors will benefit from your generosity. Thank you.

God bless,
Robin Brown

THANK YOU NOTE FROM THE READINESS CENTER

Pastor Joan & Congregants,
Thank you for your generous support of our children and parents. We are planning and praying for a safe start to the school year. We are looking forward to having our families back together again! You are all held in our prayers.

Gratefully,
Martha

Worship

FACEBOOK

We love to share pictures of Saron's ministry on our Facebook page and we get great feedback. It is our practice not to put names with the pictures. If you have questions, or prefer your picture not to appear, please contact Pastor.

SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS

As you prepare for worship, you are invited to read and reflect on the Scriptures for the day.

Sunday Oct. 4 –
St. Francis of Assisi, Renewer of the Church
Genesis 1:1, 20-28
Psalm 148
1 Corinthians 3:11-23
Mark 10:35-45

Sunday Oct. 11 –
Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Isaiah 25:1-9
Psalm 23
Philippians 4:1-9
Matthew 22:1-14

Sunday Oct. 18–
Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost
Isaiah 45:1-7
Psalm 96:1-9 -13 (7)
1 Thessalonians 1:1-10
Matthew 22:15-22

Sunday Oct. 25 –
Reformation
Jeremiah 31:31-34
Psalm 46
Romans 3:19-28
John 8:31-36

Nursery News

Watch for more nursery news once we are back to in-person worship. For more information, contact Marilyn Lucy, Krin Jurgensen, or Pastor Oleson.

2020 FLOWER CALENDAR

The 2020 flower calendar is posted. Cost: $25.00/vase. This is an opportunity for you to give flowers in honor or memory of someone. The church orders the flowers (unless you indicate otherwise) and you can take the flowers home after 2nd service. We will resume the ordering of flowers when we are back to in-person worship.

Youth

Are you in grades 6-12? Please join us for youth group activities! For more info, contact Scott at *scottgaspari@outlook.com or (Cell) 847-373-8825.*

LEARNING

Saron is a congregation seeking to become more fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture, in order that we might live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened, empowered and sent by the Word.

Tuesday Evening Men's Bible Study

We are doing our study online at 6:00pm on Tuesdays with the use of "Zoom." Each week, I will send out an "invitation" to you showing the link to the study. The invitation will also include the lessons that will be studied. If you are not sure if I have your email, please send it to me (Bob) so that I can send you the link and information.

For more information call Bob Kynast at 269-921-2786 or bobkynast@gmail.com or Don Hafer at 269-985-3637 or hafer.don@gmail.com. All men are invited to join us.

As the Bible says "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" (Proverbs 27:17).

1ST SUNDAY BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

We are ready to go again. Sunday, October 4th, 6:30 p.m. we will begin our discussion series with a ZOOM meeting. The sign-on information will be sent to all who have attended in the past or expressed interest in joining with us. If you want to make sure to be included, please contact Kathy Cowall (269) 428-0354 or kcowall@hotmail.com.

"The Wife" by Meg Wolitzer is the story of a long and stormy marriage, a secret kept for decades and a woman forced to confront the sacrifices she's made in order to achieve the life she thought she wanted. Lots to ponder with this book.

Coming November 1st is "Educated" by Tara Westover. In her gripping and sometimes unbelievable memoir, Tara tells about being raised by survivalists, being seventeen the first time she set foot in a classroom and how she managed to earn a PhD From Cambridge University. It is a story about family loyalty, grief, what the heart of education is and the will to change one's life no matter how difficult it becomes. So, please, read and come share ideas. All are welcome at every discussion.

"He liked the mere act of reading, the magic of turning scratches on a page into words inside his head". (John Green)

THURSDAY MORNING WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Explore The Sermon on the Mount!
Explore the most popular sermon ever delivered!

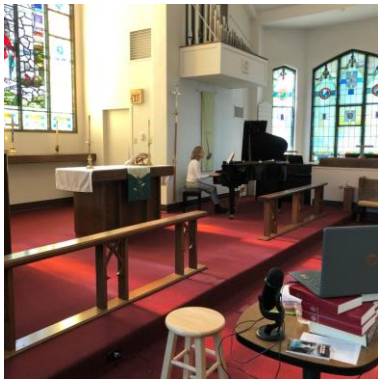
A new study has begun. The group meets virtually from 9:30-11:00 a.m. via Zoom on Thursday mornings. Cost of the book is $12.00. Contact Pastor if you are interested. New folks are always welcome!

The Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5-7, contains some of Jesus' most profound and most memorable teachings. What might these teachings have meant to his disciples and to the others who first heard them? How do they enhance our reading of the rest of the Gospel of Matthew, and how do they speak across the centuries to listeners today? How, if we pay careful attention to his words, does Jesus provide us a road map to living as God would have us live?

In *Sermon on the Mount: A Beginner's Guide to the Kingdom of Heaven,* Dr. Amy-Jill Levine introduces the major topics in the Sermon on the Mount, explains historical and theological contexts, and shows how the words of Jesus echo his Jewish tradition and speak forward to reach hearts and minds today.

Men's monthly Bible Devotions and Breakfast

We will meet via Zoom at 9 a.m. on Saturday, October 3. Contact Dennis Lundgren for more information or watch Your e-mail for details.



Our Sunday morning setup. Irma Gorman leads the service with prelude and postlude.

Pastor conducts outdoor worship with Holy Communion in the courtyard.

Women of the ELCA.

DEBORAH CIRCLE

Deborah Circle will meet by way of Zoom on Wednesday, October 14, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. Colleen Lundgren will lead the study. Zoom information will be emailed to everyone.

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

As stated in last month's newsletter in detail, this year our Lutheran World Relief project donations will be by check only rather than collecting items for personal care kits and fabric kits. If you wish to participate, please send your check payable to **Saron Church Women** to the church by **October 1.** Please write **LWR** on the check memo line. The total collected will be sent to LWR Quilt & Kits Shipping Fund. Thank you very much in advance for your generosity in supporting this ministry. Many people benefit from this project.

Hospitality

Watch for more news as we get closer to getting back together in person.

Outreach

BENTON HARBOR SOUP KITCHEN

On August 27th, with a lot of precautions, Mary & Bob Kynast, Darlene Kiessel , & Kathie Bradley packed sack lunches for 120 people to be distributed at the Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen.

This has become the new "norm" this summer for lunches instead of the ham dinner that we previously prepared and served in the dining room. On the 4th Thursday of the month we prepare a sack lunch which includes a turkey sandwich, chips, an apple, dessert and water. Soup Kitchen employees then serve the meal to guests outside the building.

If you feel comfortable helping prepare the lunch please contact Kathie Bradley (269-921-4665]. At this time we are not provided cookies for the lunches. During this pandemic it is even more important to continue Saron's mission of *Joyfully sharing God's love for all!*

Thank you to all who continue to support this ministry with your time, contributions, & prayers.

After the church building opens **large cans of fruit will be needed at the Soup Kitchen** & can be dropped off anytime at the church. Any questions or to volunteer or provide cookies at a later date please contact Kathie Bradley at 269-427-7083.

God's Work. Our Hands

Thank you to all who participated in the "God's Work. Our Hands" project by donating school supplies. They were collected at the Johnson home and then delivered by Keith Stevens to Lybrook Elementary School in Eau Claire, where they happily accepted our donations.

WHAT EXACTLY IS THRIVENT?

Thrivent began as a Lutheran fraternal and benevolent association. First called Lutheran Brotherhood, then Aid Association for Lutherans, and now Thrivent, the organization has grown in what they do and even expanded membership availability. Being a Lutheran is no longer a requirement. Thrivent offers investments and insurance products, but also provides funds for community and church projects that benefit local towns and congregations. For instance, any Thrivent member can apply for two Action grants of $250 in a calendar year. And many types of projects qualify for funding. An example – the new paint for Saron's lounge was purchased with money from a Thrivent Action grant. Thrivent Choice is another benefit for members who own Thrivent products at certain levels. The member can request donations in his/her name to a wide variety of community organizations such as their own church, a Soup Kitchen, a Boys and Girls Club, and even a symphony orchestra or other musical group. The Thrivent website explains who qualifies and how to request a donation; there is also a long list of organizations that can receive donations and a procedure for asking to have your favorite non-profit added to their list.

So if you're shopping for insurance or investments, you might want to check into whether Thrivent products might be the answer for you. If you google Thrivent, you will find a list of local offices and representatives.

INCLUSIVITY TASK FORCE

A task force at Saron has been looking at issues of welcome and inclusivity and how to best live into our mission of "joyfully sharing God's love for all!!!" As noted, the task force is working toward the possibility of Saron becoming a Reconciling In Christ congregation, that is a congregation intentional in its welcome of those in the LGBTQIA+ community.

Serving on the task force are Kati and Nick Hooper, Laurel Gacek, Laura Hicks, Darlene Kiessel and Pastor. Contact any of these folks if you would like to know more.

Interfaith Action
SW Michigan Peace & Justice Collaborative

Interfaith Action and Berrien County Alpact are co-sponsoring a zoom panel discussion on Racism, Justice, and Health Disparities. September 29 from 6-7:30 p.m. Presenters, representing key health organizations in the community, are representatives from Spectrum Lakeland, Berrien County Public Health Department, Riverwood Center, Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Center, Cass Family Health Center, and Intercare Community Health Center. You can register at https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0rfuiqpzwpGdP-qRfKQw3diMpVFM4NSh-I

Support

Tax Incentives during the Covid-19 Pandemic

"Above-the-line" tax deduction for charitable contributions

The federal government recently passed legislation to provide financial relief to families as a result of Covid-19. As part of the CARES Act, for the purpose of increasing the work of charitable organizations, individual taxpayers will receive new tax incentives for making charitable donations. The provision encourages individuals to contribute to religious, charitable, and educational organizations by creating a new "above-the-line" deduction (i.e. for taxpayers who take the standard deduction). This deduction permits deduction of up to $300 of annual monetary contributions. This is applicable for tax years beginning after 2019, and does not sunset after 2020. A related provision increases the limitations on deductions for charitable contributions by individuals who do itemize. For those individuals, the 50% of adjusted gross income limitation is suspended for cash contributions made in 2020.

For members over 72 years old drawing income from an IRA, the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) is waived for 2020, thereby reducing your tax burden. Effective January 1, 2020, the CARES Act waived RMDs for defined contribution 401(k) plans, 403(b) plans, governmental 457(b) plans, and IRAs for calendar year 2020. The waiver applies to RMDs to be made in 2020 and to 2019 RMDs that were due by April 1, 2020 (if not already made in 2019). The good news is that Qualified Charitable Distributions can still be made directly from an IRA account to the church that will both benefit our ministry and reduce the member's taxable income. As always, members are advised to check with their tax advisor for the latest information and interpretations before filing.

STOCK DONATIONS

Saron partners with TD Ameritrade, a brokerage firm, to accept stock donations. If you would like to donate stock, email Joe Ulrey to receive more information. Thanks! Joe Ulrey josephulrey@yahoo.com

SARON LUTHERAN CHURCH
510 MAIN STREET
ST. JOSEPH, MI 49085

Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email:info@saronlutheran.org

A Congregation of:
The North/West Lower Michigan Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

October 2020
We're on Facebook! Like us at
www.facebook.com/saronlutheranchurchst.joseph

On October 4 we commemorate St. Francis, Renewer of the Church. As part of our worship we will hold a virtual pet blessing. Send your photos to info@saronlutheran.org by September 30.

October 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 9:30 a.m. Bible Study Via Zoom	**2**	**3** 9:00 a.m.Men's Devotional will be held by Via Zoom
4 Worship at 11:00 a.m. Via Zoom	**5** 11:00 a.m. Prayer Time (in homes)	**6** 6:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study. Via Zoom	**7** 11:00a.m. Virtual Coffee Via Zoom	**8** 9:30 a.m. Bible Study Via Zoom Pastor on vacation----------	**9** ----------	**10** ----------
11 Worship at 11:00 a.m. Via Zoom ----------	**12** Columbus Day 11:00 a.m. Prayer Time (in homes) 6:00 p.m. Support Comm. Via Zoom Newsletter Articles due	**13** 6:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study. Via Zoom	**14** 11:00a.m. Virtual Coffee Via Zoom	**15** 9:30 a.m. Bible Study Via Zoom	**16** Prayer Vigil	**17**
18 Worship at 11:00 a.m. Via Zoom	**19** 11:00 a.m. Prayer Time (in homes) 7:00 p.m. Church Council Meeting by Via Zoom	**20** 6:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study. Via Zoom	**21** 11:00a.m. Virtual Coffee Via Zoom	**22** 9:30 a.m. Bible Study Via Zoom 9:00 a.m. Soup Kitchen	**23**	**24**
25 Worship at 11:00 a.m. Via Zoom	**26** 11:00 a.m. Prayer Time (in homes)	**27** 6:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study. Via Zoom	**28** 11:00a.m. Virtual Coffee Via Zoom	**29** 9:30 a.m. Bible Study Via Zoom	**30**	**31** Halloween